



What's Local in Michigan in December?

No matter what color, form, or texture, December still has plenty of Michigan-grown squash on hand. This recipe from an "up north" chef also features Michigan chestnuts. Then check out this website to learn more about this lovely nut and how it rose from near extinction after one of the worst ecological disasters in North America.

<http://www.chestnutgrowersinc.com/index.shtml>

Kelly's Roasted Chestnut and Butternut Squash Soup

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup diced onion
- 1 cup peeled and diced butternut squash
- 2 cups roasted chestnuts
- 3 cups chicken stock
- 1 cup white wine
- Salt and pepper to taste



Sauté diced onion in 1 tablespoon butter until translucent; add next four ingredients and simmer 20 minutes or until chestnuts and squash are tender; purée with a hand held mixer until smooth and then season with salt and pepper; add more stock if soup is too thick. Serves 6–8.

Chef Tom Kelly, Hattie's Grill, Sutton's Bay Michigan



Christmas Gift Giving Ideas On the Cheap

- * Gourmet coffees with a personal coffee cup
- * Pound of pistachios
- * Child's artwork, framed
- * Journal with special inscription inside
- * Teacup with box of herbal tea
- * Deck of cards and book of card game rules
- * Homemade cocoa mix in a pretty jar
- * Collage of special photos
- * Gel pens and pretty stationary
- * Bottle of sparkling cider
- * Home baked bread, include recipe
- * Basket filled with deli cheese and fruit
- * Craft supplies
- * Holiday serving bowl or platter
- * Decorative napkins and napkin rings
- * Fancy chocolate bars tied with a ribbon
- * Gardening gloves with a plant or flower seeds
- * Photo album, hand decorated is even better
- * Expensive socks, still under \$10
- * Christmas ornaments

<http://www.betterbudgeting.com/articles/money/63giftsunder10dollars>. 63 Gift Ideas for Under \$10

WSB December Calendar:

Walking Club: Every Friday and Wednesday. This month we have noon walks 5 days a week until 12/15!

Lunch-n-Knit, Bead & Crafts: 12-1 pm. Room 207 Meet every third Thursday beginning Jan 15 from 12-1 in Room 207 for Knitting, Beading, Crafting.

Book Club: 12-1:00 pm. Room 207: Our December book is *My Stroke of Insight* by Jill Bolte Taylor. Candice will lead the discussion on Dec. 11 at noon, WS 207. The book for January will be: *Into the Wild*, by Jon Krakauer. The story of Chris McCandless, a young man who embarked on a solo journey into the wilds of Alaska and whose body was discovered four months later, explores the allure of the wilderness. We will discuss this book on January 8 at noon, WS 207. For more info: Tisa Vorce vorcet@michigan.gov

6W2W Update



Team members from 7th floor used a "bubble walk" as a way to earn physical activity and stress reduction points.

We have 67 participants in this year's 6W2W program and several teams. Soon know who the final winners are; it will be close for several!

As you can see, we've had a good time. We hope you will join us for similar wellness activities in 2009!

Social Connections Pay off

When you thank your friends and family this holiday season, the reasons to do so may extend beyond good manners. Study after study has shown that social connections - through family, friends, or even with companion animals - seem to pay off in terms of good health, longevity and even prolonged survival among patients with very serious diseases. Some evidence linking good health with strong ties to family and friends include:

1. The immune system's natural killer cell activity is negatively affected by three "distress indicators" - one of which is lack of social support.
2. One study of 75 medical students found that those who were lonely had more sluggish natural killer cells than students who weren't.
3. Research has shown that people who have companion animals have less illness than people who do not. Companion animals' owners also recover from serious illness faster.
4. Susceptibility to heart attacks appears to correlate with how often people use the words "I," "me," and "mine" in casual speech.
5. And believe it or not, studies show that people who get out and spend more time with others during cold and flu season actually get fewer episodes of colds or flu than those who choose to be alone.
6. Being grateful for what you have has been associated with physical and emotional health.

Article from Dr. Weil.com: <http://www.drweil.com/drw/u/TIP03107/Six-Medical-Reasons-to-Be-Thankful.html> Thank you to Anne Esdale

The monthly newsletter comes to you from your Washington Square Wellness Committee. Do you have great ideas for getting our building moving and keeping us healthy? Join us! For more information contact Christi at 5-8771 or downingch@michigan.gov